



Mental Health Loan Repayment PROGRAM

Program Overview

The Mental Health Loan Repayment Program is for fully licensed, practicing mental health professionals who practice therapy or counseling in eligible underserved areas of West Virginia. Applicants must certify that they possess educational debt in an amount equal to or exceeding \$10,000. They must be a graduate of an accredited program and be fully licensed in an approved, eligible behavioral health field. Successful applicants may be employed full time or part time but must be employed in an underserved area in West Virginia and providing individual and/or group counseling or therapy for a majority of their practice. Applicants must be a West Virginia resident

Service Obligation and Award

The MHLRP allocates approximately 20 awards each year to Mental Health practitioners in West Virginia. During the 2024-2025 year thanks to additional funding from the Bureau of Behavioral Health, we will be able to award up to 35 applicants!!

The award amount will be at least \$10,000 for one (1) year of full-time service or two (2) years of part-time service for eligible mental health professionals. The award shall be renewable up to three (3) years based on availability of funds and continued eligibility for the loan repayment program. The full amount of the award shall be disbursed to the participant upon the completion of their one or two year service obligation.

The service obligation is either one year of full-time (a minimum of 37.5 hours/week) or two years of part-time (a minimum of 20 hours /week) practice. All eligible service sites must be in West Virginia.

Eligible Disciplines and Guidelines

To be eligible for the MHLRP you must be a graduate of an accredited program at an institution of higher education, having obtained a degree preparing them for licensure and currently fully licensed as one of the following:

- * Licensed doctoral clinical psychologist
- * Licensed master's level psychologist
- * Licensed independent clinical social worker (LICSW)
- * Licensed certified social worker (LCSW)
- * Licensed professional counselor (LPC)
- * Licensed marriage and family therapist (LMFT)
- * Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner

Eligible Sites for Service Obligations can vary county to county. Please use the information posted on our website [here](#) to help determine if your site is eligible.





Frequently Asked Questions

Who can apply?

To be eligible to apply you must certify you hold an amount of debt equal to or exceeding the award, be willing to sign a contract for a one-year service obligation to an underserved area of West Virginia, must be a graduate of an accredited program, having obtained a degree from an institution of higher education and you must be currently licensed in one of the following:

- Licensed doctoral clinical psychologist (PsyD)
- Master's level licensed psychologist (Psy M)
- Licensed independent clinical social worker (LICSW)
- Licensed certified social worker (LCSW)
- Licensed professional counselor (LPC)
- Licensed marriage and family therapist (LMFT)
- Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP)

Other mental health disciplines which are experiencing a shortage of practitioners will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Senior Director of Health Sciences.

June 15, 2024!!

What is the application deadline?

The deadline for the application will be announced on our [website](#). All application materials must be postmarked or received via fax by posted due date.

What is the amount of the award?

The maximum amount of each award this year will be \$10,000, The total award must go towards qualified educational debt in return for a service obligation of one year in an underserved area in West Virginia. The award can be renewed up to three times for additional service obligations in underserved areas in West Virginia if you have additional qualified educational debt and are rewarded.

What is an eligible site?

If you need assistance on looking up your site to see if it qualifies, click [here](#). Please note that even if your county is not a Health Professional Shortage Area county, please double-check with the search function. An example would be Monongalia Co. We have two eligible sites even though the county itself is not a HPSA county. Additional resources can be found on our [website](#) or by emailing BehavioralHealth@wvhepc.edu.

How do I apply?

Complete an application found [here](#) and two professional references. The reference forms will be emailed to you after you have completed your online application. If selected for an award, you will be required to provide proof of licensure and your educational degree.

Are LGSW professionals eligible to apply for MHLRP?

Unfortunately, at this time those with the license level of LGSW are not eligible. If you would like to join a contact list for updates and announcements about the Mental Health Loan Repayment Program, please send an email to BehavioralHealth@wvhepc.edu.

Are school counselors eligible to apply?

If you are a school counselor who holds a LPC or LMFT license and the majority of your time is spent providing therapy to groups or individuals in an approved underserved area, you would be eligible to apply. Due to the requirement that the majority of your practice be therapy, we do not anticipate many school counselors will meet the eligibility requirements.

Are psychiatrists eligible to apply?

At this time psychiatry professionals are not included in this program's eligible mental health professions. If you would like to join a contact list for updates and announcements about the Mental Health Loan Repayment Program, please send an email to BehavioralHealth@wvhepc.edu.

What if my license is expired or I am still under supervision?

Unfortunately, you will need to be licensed to qualify for this program. The population we are trying to reach and retain within Mental and Behavioral Health are those who are currently licensed in their field and providing therapy directly to the underserved populations in eligible sites at this time.

Will this award be taxed as income?

The award will not count as income. Please direct any other questions about awards to a tax professional for advisement.

Do private practice professionals qualify?

Yes, private practice can qualify as long as they are within a Health Professional Shortage Area and accept Medicaid.

If you need assistance on looking up your site to see if it qualifies click [here](#). Please note that even if your county is not a HPSA county, please double-check with the search function. An example would be Monongalia Co. We have two eligible sites even though the county itself is not a HPSA county.

Do Counselors who work in corrections qualify?

Yes, correctional counselors would be eligible as long as they are providing therapy/counseling services for the majority of their time. It can be both individual and/or group sessions. The population must meet eligibility requirements as underserved.

Can students apply for this award?

No. You must have already graduated and be licensed and practicing in one of the approved disciplines. This program is designed for professionals who have graduated vs a traditional scholarship program which would pay a portion of tuition or make payment to the school for tuition.

